

idea of their magnitude, compared with the force employed to overcome them, and the various discouragements under which the work has been conducted. It is therefore, perhaps, a duty which he owes as well to those immediately interested in the work, as to himself, to concisely set forth the more recent causes which have retarded the work. A moment's reflection, must satisfy the most superficial observer, that so much of the work as remained to be executed at the last annual meeting, could only be effected during seasons of low water in the river; for, otherwise, the water flowing from the river into the lock pits would necessarily suspend the work during the continuance of this obstruction. Soon after the adjournment of the Board last fall, rains set in freely, producing a considerable rise of the water; from thence during the winter, and in fact until about the first of July, repeated interruptions, at short intervals, from the like cause, were constantly occurring. Another most fruitful source of obstruction was experienced from the sliding of the neighboring banks, which are very high, into the lock pits. This invariably happened whenever freshets occurred. Repeatedly during the year the two lower pits were nearly opened to the required width and depth, and were again filled to a considerable height. Thus every freshet had the two-fold injurious effect of suspending the work and occasioning large quantities of earth to slide into the pits, making it necessary to go over the same work repeatedly. After the excessive and long continued rains through the spring and early part of summer had subsided, and the weather became favorable for our operations, the hope was indulged that no further difficulties would be encountered in the progress of the work to completion. This hope was disappointed. In the month of May the highest freshet occurred in the Roanoke that has happened in about twenty years. It is a fact well attested by reason and experience, that whenever a high fresh happens in the Roanoke during the summer months, so as to cover the bottom lands, the surrounding country within the influence of the river atmosphere becomes extremely sickly. The causes are obvious and need no explanation. In the months of August, September and October, our hands were so uncommonly sickly, arising as well from the cause already mentioned as the nature of the work in which they were employed, that during the whole of this time only about one half of our force was effective to perform labor; and, indeed, such continues to be the fact to the present moment. In these various interruptions, the Superintendent indulges the hope, will be found ample cause for the delay which has latterly attended the progress of the work—a delay, as annoying to his feelings as it must be unpleasant to all interested in the work. A small portion of earth remains to be excavated from the basin connecting the fifth and sixth locks, and between the latter lock and the river. Four or five days more work will finish the lock at Eaton's falls, and the necessary repairs of the canal at that place. Much labour has been employed in repairing the embankments of, and clearing out accumulations of sand in the Roanoke canal, in making and repairing gates at the stone locks, and laying a new floor to one of them. A heavy raft of logs which obstructed the navigation of the river at Eaton's falls has been removed, and an excellent canal formed from the basin in Weldon to Mr. Jabez Smith's mill, to supply the water power contracted for with him.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

A. JOINER.

*Weldon, 9th Nov. 1833.*